

Pastor Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church

**Mark 10:1-12 | Divorce**

April 11, 2021

**WELCOME:**

- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

For the past two weeks we have celebrated Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday.

Today we are back to our normal verse by verse series in the Gospel of Mark

Please turn your Bibles to Mark 10:1-12.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Today, I'm put in a more awkward situation than normal.

Every week, I have the privilege of proclaiming and teaching you the very words of God.

Of which I'm entirely unworthy to do.

I'm reminded every week of my own personal struggles against sin— as the Holy Spirit teaches me His Word so that I may in turn teach you.

Many times, in my preparation, I'm reminded of my past. *-not good*

This week is one of those weeks in particular.

For those of you new to River Bible, we teach and preach through the Word of God, verse-by-verse.

And in doing so, it is our prayer that you will experience God day-by-day.

Teaching God's Word verse-by-verse has many benefits, but the primary benefit is that we hear the whole counsel of God.

Nothing is left out. Everything must be addressed.

We don't skip topics that we are uncomfortable with.

Today is one of these topics

Contrary to popular belief, preaching the word of God is not a Ted Talk.

Preaching the word of God is a matter of life or death—for eternity.

Your personal decision on what you do with these sermons matters.

Because this life that God has given you is spiritual probation.

Now, I'm compelled to do something I don't want to do.

I need to share a personal story with you before I preach today's message.

~~Today's sermon is on divorce.~~

The last time I incorporated my personal life into a sermon was on October 21, 2018.

It was my first sermon as your senior pastor, and I felt compelled to share God's story and His providence as to how He brought Amy and I to RBC.

But today is very different.

And I need to share a part of my life with you that I'm not proud of.

And the reason I'm sharing this is that it directly correlates to the sermon for today.

Divorce, obviously, is a <sup>tender</sup> controversial subject.

The very fact that I even mention it causes anxiety among us as a Church family.

And I pray in Jesus' name that this testimony of mine that has a lot of divorce will calm your apprehension as we get started.

So w/ that disclaimer  
TESTIMONY: Here's my story.

My parents got divorced when I was a little boy.

My brother and I turned into weekend warriors visiting dad. My brother always seemed to get along with dad. Me... not so much.

To my own shame, I never really got to know my dad.

I loved him, but I really didn't like him.

I never understood why he always had a beer in one hand and women on his mind... until it was too late.

My mom remarried ~~several~~ years later to who I would now consider the best father figure I had ever had.

His name was Jay.

He was tall and handsome. He was strong.

Jay grew up on the farm in Ohio and bailed a lot of hay.

He had morals, he had rules...and he wasn't afraid of enforcing them.

Jay also loved Jesus.

This big strong man actually took the time to read the Bible to my mom, brother, and me.

For whatever reason, as soon as mom and Jay got married, he was diagnosed with cancer and died within a few months.

It seemed that the only man I respected as a father figure was gone...just like that.

A few years later, my mother re-married again.

This time to a guy named Tom. He was the opposite of Jay.

I don't think he really knew what he was getting into taking on two-step children.

Tom tried to love us, but his façade wouldn't last but a few years.

His drinking and drug use became apparent.

So, once again, my mother filed for another divorce.

During this time, my brother and I were attending a Roman Catholic school. | Chord

I was a good kid as far as my mom knew (apart from the drinking, the drugs, and the sex).

In college, I met a girl, and we got married. I was 22 years old. Her name was Sherry.

Fast forward...around the age of 28, I got restless and bored with life.

I started racing motorcycles.

A team of us spent the next few years on the weekends traveling around the country racing on what was called the RPM circuit.

It was also during this time to where my world started to come crashing down around me.

Physically, I was severely depressed.

→ I WAS a mess .  
Spiritually, if you had asked me if I was a Christian, I would have said yes, because I thought so.

I mean, after all, I went to church, I went to confession, I served as an altar boy....but I definitely was not acting like a Christian.

It was also during this time that my dirty little secret with pornography had been exposed.

It took 20 years of addiction, but I had an emotional affair with someone at work that led to adultery with several other women. ~~who married to Sherry.~~

I decided it was best to pack up and leave Sherry one weekend – no explanation, no apologies – I just left and filed for divorce.

I was now in my late 20's, and my life was entirely out of control.

One of the women I was committing adultery with actually left her husband and her two children to come to live with me.

I thought to myself that, wow....she left her family for me—this is real!

I should probably do the “right thing” and marry her.

I mean, it was the right thing, right?

The reality is that I really didn't even like her – let alone love her.

I thought I did. But the brutal truth was that I only liked what she could do for me.

It was strange because, in all reality, I really couldn't stand this woman I was completely obsessed with and... now married to.

This whole story proves how sexual sin makes you stupid.

That marriage<sup>2nd</sup> ended with her physically assaulting me and then her spending the weekend in jail.

I filed for divorce. That marriage lasted less than five months.

After my second divorce, at the age of 30, I started to evaluate my life and realized what a train wreck it was.

I started to seek God....go figure!

At 31, moved me to Houston, Texas.

I was going to church, getting involved in singles classes.

I was looking for a good Christian girl because I thought I was a Christian....

One night I went on a date (I had no business dating because I was a very confused and insecure little boy at 31 years old, but I went on a date) to a Christian rock concert.

After the concert, we went back to her place and slept together.

The next day, I felt a heaviness that I couldn't shake. Something was very, very wrong all day.

It was like something was physically weighing me down, pushing my shoulders to the ground.

It was late afternoon, and I got back from running some errands, and as soon as I walked into the apartment...the presence of God overwhelmed me.

I fell to the floor and started crying.

~~I couldn't take the heaviness anymore.~~

I heard Someone say, "Give it to me."

Don't ask me how I knew that the "it" He was referring to was my life. I just knew.

I screamed, "TAKE IT!.....I HATE IT...I HATE IT!"

Now I don't know how long I laid on the floor and cried that day...but I fell asleep.

I don't know if I was asleep for 10 minutes or 2 hours, but when I woke up, I went straight to bed and slept through the afternoon, all night, and woke up in the morning in time to go to work.

I met the Lord Jesus Christ that day, and He alone forgave me for my sins, including my addiction to pornography and the sins of adultery and divorce.

And then, in July of 2005, Almighty God, in His mercy, grace, and kindness, gave me a second gift – A Godly, beautiful woman named Amy Lynn.

~~And through her, He is teaching me what true love and intimacy are.~~

So all that to say, that if you plan on calling River Bible Church home...

You need to know that your pastor was a former addict, adulterer and twice divorced.

You also need to know that if God can change a pervert into a pastor, he'll also change your life as well.

So all that to say this, I personally know the pain and the shame that comes from ~~the words of Jesus this morning.~~ *the topic of divorce*

I watched my mother go through two divorces and I also experienced two divorces myself.

And the last thing in the world that I want you to think, as I teach God's truth this morning, is that I'm pointing a finger at you...

Especially if you have gone through the pain of divorce, because dear friends, I'm not.

I pray that you receive today's sermon with both grace and truth.

Secondly, before we read the Scripture passage, I also want to share how Lord God Almighty also knows the pain of divorce.

All through the OT, we see a theme weaved into the history of Israel.

The theme is that the Jewish people are God's chosen people.

He gives many illustrations of this, but one illustration is that of marriage. *NT AD well*

In the book of Hosea, after God rebukes Israel's spiritual and physical adultery, God says this...

*+* cf. **Hosea 2:19**— I will take you to be my wife forever.

*I will take you to be my wife in righteousness,  
justice, love, and compassion.*

*+* cf. **Hosea 2:20**— I will take you to be my wife in faithfulness,  
and you will know the Lord.

Unfortunately, Israel didn't want to be a wife.



Approximately 600 years later, God speaks through the prophet Jeremiah...

cf. **Jeremiah 3:6**— In the days of King Josiah the Lord asked me, "Have you seen what unfaithful Israel has done? She has ascended every high hill and gone under every green tree to prostitute herself there.

cf. **Jeremiah 3:7**— I thought, 'After she has done all these things, she will return to me.' But she didn't return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it.

cf. **Jeremiah 3:8**— I observed that it was because unfaithful Israel had committed adultery that I had sent her away and had given her a certificate of divorce.

*Did you know that?*

Yes, God divorced His bride, Israel. So He too knows the pain of divorce.

*Now, quite the introduction*

So it is through that lens that we get to our Scripture passage this morning.

*\*Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.\**

**SCRIPTURE: Mark 10:1-12 CSB**

**Mark 10:1**—Jesus set out from there and went to the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Then crowds converged on him again, and as was his custom he taught them again.

**Mark 10:2**— Some Pharisees came to test him, asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

**Mark 10:3**— Jesus replied to them, "What did Moses command you?"

**Mark 10:4**— They said, "Moses permitted us to write divorce papers and send her away."

**Mark 10:5**— But Jesus told them, "He wrote this command for you because of the hardness of your hearts."

**Mark 10:6**— But from the beginning of creation God **made them male and female.**

**Mark 10:7**— For this reason a man will leave his father and mother

**Mark 10:8**— **and the two will become one flesh.** So they are no longer two, but one flesh.

**Mark 10:9**— Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

**Mark 10:10**— When they were in the house again, the disciples questioned Jesus about this matter.

**Mark 10:11**— Jesus said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her."

**Mark 10:12**— Also, if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

**\*\*These are the very words from God for us this morning.\*\***

**PRAY:**

**EXEGESIS:**

**Mark 10:1**—Jesus set out from there and went to the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Then crowds converged on him again, and as was his custom he taught them again.

Jesus leaves his home base in Capernaum (9:33) and starts the journey toward Jerusalem.

This area across the Jordan is where John the Baptist ministered.

That's an important detail, and we'll get to why in a moment.

**Mark 10:2**—Some Pharisees came to test him, asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

The Pharisees are enemies of Jesus.

And they bring up the subject of divorce.

Divorce in the first century was a controversial subject like it is today.

Notice the way the question is asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

From what we've learned about all the confrontations that Jesus has had with the Pharisees over the past 43 weeks—nearly a year now...

Do you really think that they're looking for legal advice?

—NO!

~~The Pharisees were testing Jesus again.~~

TEST: *Skandalizō* means "to entrap".

to cause a scandal

They could have asked the question this way...

*"Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any thing other than adultery?"*

The Pharisees were doing what many people do today.

They take a controversial topic, and are waiting for Jesus to say the slightest thing wrong (in their opinion), so they can take it out of context and use it against Him.

The very way they phrased the question tells us something, doesn't it?

The Pharisees knew that Jesus was opposed to divorce.

They heard Jesus preach the sermon on the mount:

*cf. **Matthew 5:31**— "It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.,,*

*cf. **Matthew 5:32**— But I tell you, everyone who divorces his wife, except in a case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*

The Pharisees wanted a simple answer to a very politically hot topic.

There were three views in the first century on divorce:

1. Liberal view: allowed divorce for any reason.
2. Conservative view: allowed divorce only for sexual immorality.
3. Closed view: did not allow divorce and remarriage for any reason.

Pause for one moment...as you look at those views on your screen.

Has anything changed over the past 2,121 years? No, those views still exist today. The Pharisees wanted Jesus to give this fast blanket statement that would indict Him.

Either a yes or no answer would cause division among the people following Jesus.

~~The Pharisees are trying to put Jesus in a no-win situation.~~

Now, the fact that Jesus <sup>LOCATION</sup> was across the Jordan is significant.

This area is known as Perea. Perea is where Herod Antipas rules.

This is the same area where Antipas had put John the Baptist to death because John had openly railed against Antipas's divorce and remarriage in Mark chapter 6.

If Jesus said that it's against the law for a man to divorce his wife and to marry another, He would be acting just like John the Baptizer who got his head cut off because of this issue.

The Pharisees were trying to put Jesus into a position to either condemn Herod and possibly lose his life or denounce John the Baptizer and possibly lose his following.

Dang. Wow. This is a wickedly brilliant tactic by the Pharisees.

The Pharisees were trying to paint Jesus as an intolerant conservative.

Can you see the headlines on social media in the first century—

Jesus calls ALL divorced people adulterers! *-that wasn't have gone over well.*

**Mark 10:3**— Jesus replied to them, "What did Moses command you?"

The sense in verse three is that Jesus answered immediately.

Jesus does not back away from a hostile political question.

Jesus doesn't fear this topic one bit.

Notice here that Jesus doesn't play their game.

He doesn't answer their question.

He takes control of the situation by asking a question of His own.

Jesus is not going to get into a legal discussion—split hairs— with the Pharisees.

His first order of business was to point the Pharisees back to the Word of God.

Since Moses was their authority, he asked them what Moses had to say about divorce.

**Mark 10:4**— They said, "Moses permitted us to write divorce papers and send her away."

The Pharisees come with an agenda.

They ask this question <sup>—Verse 2</sup> and now answer Jesus' question with the attitude of... "*What can I get away with?*"

**KEYPOINT #1:**

*The Pharisees are interested in their rights—not their responsibilities.*

They ask only about the husband's right to divorce.

They pay no attention to the needs of the wife or the children.

Notice how the Pharisees answered.

Jesus asks, "*what did Moses command?*"

They said, "Moses permitted..."

This is called bad biblical interpretation.

The Pharisees focused on what was legally allowed, but Jesus is redirecting them to what God actually willed.

**KEYPOINT #2:**

*When your approach to Scripture is wrong, your approach to marriage (life) is also wrong.*

Single young man (woman)

What are the Pharisees talking about, "Moses permitted."

The proof text that the Pharisees used was

cf. **Deuteronomy 24:1**—If a man marries a woman, but she becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, he may write her a divorce certificate, hand it to her, and send her away from his house.

The big question in this verse is how someone interprets the word "indecent."

What does that mean? What did that include?

"Indecency" literally means "nakedness," not in a physical sense but the sense of something shameful.

cf. **Deuteronomy 23:14**—For the Lord your God walks throughout your camp to protect you and deliver your enemies to you; so your encampments must be holy. He must not see anything indecent among you, or he will turn away from you.

So, "indecent" doesn't refer to adultery.

Adultery was obviously forbidden—it's one of the Ten Commandments. (Ex. 20:14)

Adultery was punished by execution. (Lev. 20:10)

Think about this...people in the OT who committed adultery were executed.

Dear friends, that should tell us something about God's heart regarding the sanctity of marriage. *-In other words, dont you dare touch another man's wife.*

For the most part, by the <sup>Jesus time</sup> first century, very few people were being executed for adultery.

Remember what Joseph planned on doing when He found out that Mary was pregnant?

*+* cf. **Matthew 1:19**— So her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.

So this word, “indecent” describes things that would violate typical marriage responsibilities.

*↳ Disobedience is an example*

The word certainly doesn't mean that it's *a free for all* for the husband.

~~In some of the Rabbinic literature~~, Rabbi's were divorcing their wives because they burnt dinner.

She let her hair down in public or showed her ankles to another man.

~~But these are the excuses that the Pharisees were using to file for divorce.~~

Fast forward to today. We do the same thing.



In fact, we don't even need a reason to fault our spouse. We have no-fault divorce.

**Mark 10:5**— But Jesus told them, "Moses wrote this command for you because of the hardness of your hearts.

Jesus wastes no time to get to the heart of the matter, because people's hearts are always the matter.

In the larger context of Deut. 24:1-5. God protects woman's rights.

Moses doesn't command divorce.

It simply places restrictions on the husband if he decides to file for divorce.

God's will for a divorced woman in the OT was to free her from the accusation of adultery when she, out of necessity, remarried.

In the first century, women had to marry to survive.

This passage also prevented the first husband from destroying her new marriage by trying to remarry her.

Deut 24: is not an excuse to get a divorce, like the Pharisees we're saying.

Jesus addresses the fundamental issue... *The hardness of your hearts.*

**KEYPOINT #3:**

*The hardness of heart refers to the refusal of listening to God's truths.*

The Biblical command is always forgiveness, restoration, and reunion.

**KEYPOINT #4:**

*Divorce happens because of the hardness of our hearts.*

In His own words, God gives the bottom line:

cf. **Malachi 2:16**—"For I hate divorce," says the LORD,

In other words, Jesus is saying, "I hate the hardness of your heart."

The Pharisees need to discover what God commands, not what Moses has permitted.

So let's see what God commands...

**Mark 10:6**— But from the beginning of creation God **made them male and female.**

**Mark 10:7**— For this reason a man will leave his father and mother

**Mark 10:8**— **and the two will become one flesh.** So they are no longer two, but one flesh.

Jesus takes the Pharisees all the way back to the creation account.

This shows the importance of marriage.

Man didn't create marriage. God did; therefore, it is divine.

Marriage is not a business partnership that can be dissolved on a whim.

Marriage is a divine union of two lives fused into one.

These two lives now form one unit, with each part dependent on the other's very existence.

**KEYPOINT #5:**

The oneness of marriage demands that one man and one woman remain together.

Marriage is deeply theological.

The Trinity is God in three persons in one—it's a mystery.

And marriage is a reflection of that mysterious relationship.

Just as God the Father, God the Son, and The Holy Spirit are inseparable,

God intended marriage to reflect God's own relationship within Himself.

When a man and woman are married, God creates something new—a new trinitarian relationship.

One Husband and one wife with God as the head of the marriage.

**Mark 10:9**—Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

Verse nine is Jesus's conclusion to the Pharisee's question.

With God behind the union, marriage is a covenant.

Marriage is a pledge from one man to one woman and vice versa under God.

the Authority of God

Therefore divorce is an enemy to the divine institution of marriage.

Think about it, if Adam and Eve got divorced, who would they remarry?

**KEYPOINT #6:**

In the beginning, divorce was inconceivable and impossible.

**KEYPOINT #7:**

*The Fall did not change the permanence of marriage.*

**Mark 10:10**—When they were in the house again, the disciples questioned Jesus about this matter.

Notice what's missing here—the Pharisee's response to Jesus' answer.

This silence from them indicates that Jesus had escaped their trap.

But evidently, the disciples couldn't believe what they heard from Jesus.

Jesus's disciples were stunned by his teaching once again and asked what he meant.

**Mark 10:11**— He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her."

The statement is ~~bold~~ <sup>self-explanatory</sup> It needs no teaching or <sup>preaching</sup> explanation—"whoever."

Meaning "whoever divorces his wife is guilty."

Jesus did what the rabbis refused to do—

Jesus raises the status and dignity of women through the marriage covenant.

**Mark 10:12**— Also, if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Jewish women could not divorce their husbands.

Verse 12 was a teaching moment for the disciples as they engaged the Gentile world.

Because Gentile women could certainly divorce their husbands.

So in verses 11 and 12, Jesus closes all the legal loopholes of Deuteronomy 24:1.

This was revolutionary.

Jesus treats men and women equally.

*That's the text.*

**PREACH:**

Now, at this point, I must confess that it's hard for me to move from teaching into preaching.

I feel like I need to do marriage counseling.

Which I find hilarious, because people want marriage counseling from someone who's been divorced twice! *3 married 3 X.*

And some people think God doesn't have a sense of humor.

So, here's my counseling segment.

**KEYPOINT #8:**

*If you want to ruin your life, ~~commit adultery and get a divorce.~~ - START sleeping around*

*\* Counseling session over \**

*In all seriousness,* Scripture shows us that adultery does not have to end a marriage.

Now, sometimes it will, and sometimes it must.

~~Marriage is hard.~~

Read the OT book of Hosea. God told Hosea to marry a woman named Gomer.

With a name like Gomer, you better watch out for trouble!

But it's a beautiful story of our unfaithfulness to God and yet, God's faithfulness to us.



**KEYPOINT 9:**

*Marriage is supremely sacred.*

Husbands: Are you loving your wife as Christ loves His Church?

Are you gentle with her? Or are you harsh? *Are you neglecting her?*



Someday very soon, you will see the Lord Jesus face to face, and he's going to ask a question like this.

*How did you do loving my daughter that I gave you?*

~~Genesis 3 teaches that a man's sinful bent is to neglect his bride and let her run the marriage.~~

Wives: Are you respecting your husband—in Godly tangible ways?

Someday very soon, you will also see the Lord Jesus face to face, and he's going to ask you a question like this...

*In what ways did you respect my son that I gave you?*

~~Genesis 3 also teaches that a woman's sinful bent is her desire to control her husband, which means she wants to control the marriage.~~

*Marriage is hard - doesn't have to be perfect - healthy - love & respect*

Finally, for those of you who have committed adultery...

For those of you who have been the recipient of that sin...

For those of you who still carry that baggage and shame of divorce...

Please know that no matter what you've been told... these are not unforgivable sins.

These are the very sins that pinned Jesus Christ to the cross.

And it is written...

**cf. Romans 10:9**— *If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Dear friends, if you have confessed your sins and believe that Jesus is God, you are free and forgiven from your past.

The blood of Jesus Christ has washed you clean from your sin and shame.

Don't you dare leave here today feeling that you have somehow/someway sinned yourself outside the love of God.

### **PRAYER ROOM:**

For those of you who don't know Jesus or have not accepted His gift of eternal life through his suffering, death, and resurrection...

And you have questions; we are available after the service. There is a prayer room through the foyer and to the right.

**PRAY:**

Lord's Supper

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